



MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT

*Report of Inquiry into the*  
**Proposed Development of  
Land at Lymm for  
Manchester Overspill**



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*Report of an Inquiry by Mr. J. Ramsay Willis, Q.C., into an application under Section 14 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947, made to the Cheshire County Council by Manchester Corporation for residential and ancillary development of land partly within the Urban District of Lymm and partly within the Rural District of Bucklow.*

2, Mitre Court Buildings,  
TEMPLE.

16th April, 1958.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE HENRY BROOKE, M.P.  
Minister of Housing and Local Government and  
Minister for Welsh Affairs.

SIR,

I have the honour to submit to you my Report upon the Inquiry into Manchester's "overspill" problems which you appointed me to hold. The hearing took place at Chester on January 6-10, 13-17, 22 and 23 and I subsequently viewed the areas discussed at the Inquiry.

#### A. Introduction

1. The Public Inquiry was directly occasioned by an application under Section 14 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947, made to the Cheshire County Council by the Manchester Corporation for permission to develop 3,160 acres of agricultural land lying partly within the Urban District of Lymm and partly within the Rural District of Bucklow, referred to in this Report as "Lymm". The proposed development was variously described as of "a comprehensive and self-sufficing nature" and "of new town proportions", and contemplates the building of some 17,000 houses for a population of 60,000, with accommodation for industry and all appropriate services and amenities. This application was "called in" by the Minister of Housing and Local Government under Section 15 of the 1947 Act, and by invoking Section 104 of that Act, the scope of the Inquiry was extended by giving to the Inspector terms of reference which were set out in a letter from the Ministry to the County Councils of Cheshire, Lancashire and Derbyshire and to the Corporation dated 18th July, 1957, the relevant part of which is set out hereunder:

"The City Council have represented that, in order to sustain a satisfactory rate of house building, they need to develop at least one really large area. It is open to the City Council, if they think fit, to apply to the local planning authority concerned for planning permission to develop any such area or areas. If they do so apply, the Minister would propose, subject to the views of the local planning authority, to call in the application and hold a public inquiry.

The Minister's intention would be that, on this occasion, the inquiry should be held by a person who is not an officer of the Department, and that his report should be published. The Minister would propose this procedure because of the controversy which this matter has aroused

over many years and the need to ensure that all the facts were widely understood, if the ultimate decision (whatever it might be) were to be acceptable to the many local authorities and other interested bodies and persons who may be concerned.

The Minister would ask the person holding the inquiry to include in his report a realistic assessment of Manchester's likely requirements of housing sites in the years immediately following 1960; the fullest extent to which these requirements can be met within the City boundaries; the degree to which sites outside the City will be needed in those years; and the manner in which the latter need can most reasonably be met, having regard to all relevant factors, including the importance of Manchester being able to maintain a steady and adequate rate of house building, and also of avoiding (or postponing as far as possible) the taking of good agricultural land.

The inquiry would be into the facts; and the person holding the inquiry would not be asked to make any recommendation whether, in the light of the facts, the particular planning application or applications put forward by the City Council should or should not be granted. This will be for the Government to decide, when the report of the inquiry is available."

## **B. History**

2. Although not strictly relevant to the matters into which it was my task to enquire, some account of the events, starting in 1942, which have led to this Inquiry is, I think, necessary to an understanding of the issues involved.

3. From October, 1942, when they gave to Mr. Ernest Brown, then Minister of Health, their first estimate of 47,000 houses needed outside the City in the post-war period, the Manchester Corporation have consistently pressed upon the neighbouring County Councils and upon successive Ministers, their view, first, that the problem presented by the necessity to house their "overspill" population during the period of the City's redevelopment was urgent and of great magnitude and, secondly, that its solution depended upon the availability for development of at least one large site such as Lymm.

4. There has never been and there is not now any question but that the Manchester "overspill" problem is large and pressing; and at various times since a solution has been sought, it has seemed within sight. For example, in 1946 Mobberley, and later Congleton, were seriously considered, at the instance of the then Minister, as sites for development under the New Towns Act, 1946, for large populations; while the Cheshire County Council, although opposed to the Mobberley project, was at one time ready to consider favourably a similar development at Lymm. Nevertheless, Mobberley was later found to present serious geological problems, Congleton (which was not liked by Manchester) was affected by the radar installation at Jodrell Bank, Government policy ceased to favour the use of the New Towns Act as a solution, and, in framing their Development Plan, the Cheshire County Council showed themselves opposed to large scale urban development in the rural areas of the County. In one way or another the proposals to provide for Manchester "overspill" by large scale development outside

the City boundaries came to nothing, and there was no obvious solution in sight when the Corporation applied in 1953 for permission to build 10,500 houses at Mobberley and 12,000 houses at Lymm with industrial and ancillary development. The development of both areas was strongly opposed by the Cheshire County Council and the National Farmers' Union (among others) and in October, 1954, the Minister refused permission for both projects. He did, however, say that Lymm had some obvious advantages for industry, that Manchester could no doubt develop there a town with a life of its own, and indicated that such development might have had to be contemplated in the absence of any alternative less damaging to agricultural interests. The Minister considered, however, that there were such alternatives open to Manchester and so disallowed the Lymm project at that time. Three years have passed and the Manchester Corporation have renewed their claim to Lymm and assert that there is no reasonable alternative if they are to do their statutory duty as a Housing Authority.

### C. Manchester's Housing Requirements

5. It was accepted by all parties and was my understanding that the period under consideration was one which extended to the terminal date of Manchester's Development Plan, namely July, 1971.

The Corporation estimate that their housing need is in round figures 83,000 houses as at 1st January, 1958, made up as to:—

(i) Unfit houses	...	...	...	...	...	...	62,000
(ii) Houses required for natural growth of population to 1971	...	...	...	...	...	...	10,000
(iii) Houses required for families living in lodgings	...	...	...	...	...	...	9,000
(iv) Houses required to replace temporary housing accommodation at present erected on public open space, on land zoned for future open spaces, etc.	...	...	...	...	...	...	2,000

It is conceded that, even were Lymm to be available, there is no possibility of satisfying this need by 1971 and 83,000 is stated as a global figure which provides the setting and starting point of Manchester's case.

#### (i) Unfit Houses

6. A great deal of the time of the present Inquiry, as of the 1953 Inquiry, was occupied by the attack upon, and defence of, the figure of 62,000 unfit houses. This figure was pruned from that of 68,000 put forward at the 1953 Inquiry in order to give credit for houses which had disappeared as a result of clearance and demolition orders since that date, but it was nonetheless unacceptable either to the County Council or the National Farmers' Union. The basic figure from which all subsequent estimates have been derived was first calculated in 1942 and represented the number of houses built prior to 1891 and the enactment of bye-laws in that year. It was contended by the Corporation that houses of that age, built without bye-law control developed at very high densities and with great rapidity in order to house immigrant labour in the boom conditions of the industrial revolution, could safely be assumed to exhibit defects of design, structure and condition, which render them unfit by Housing Act standards and properly described as slums. Further, the Corporation relied on Clearance and Compulsory Purchase Orders which had been confirmed, with insignificant exceptions, and upon the frequent public assertion of the figure of 68,000 which had never been questioned by the Ministry.

The age of buildings does not necessarily render them unfit for human habitation and although it was, of course, impossible satisfactorily to defend or attack the complete accuracy of the figure of 62,000, it is, nevertheless, beyond question, as a tour of the area shows, that Manchester is the unenviable possessor of a very large area of slums. There are some 40,000 houses built at a density of between 42 and 48 to the acre: of nearly 80,000 houses inspected in 1950, some 69,000 were estimated to have a residual life of fifteen years or less: and individual houses have either been falling down or have had to be demolished at a rate which has now reached the figure of 700 a year, quite apart from demolition under Clearance Orders.

It seems to me safe to assume, therefore, that there are not less than 60,000 houses properly classed as unfit, after making some allowance for houses which, since the original estimate was made, are no longer occupied residentially.

(ii) *Houses required for Natural Growth up to 1971*

7. This figure has been put at various times as:

7,700 in 1953
13,000 in 1957
10,000 in 1958

It is always based on figures supplied by the Registrar General, but, in the present context, it rests ultimately on what the Medical Officer of Health of Manchester puts no higher than the best guess he can make, namely, that the trend of voluntary migration from Manchester will not in the future follow the pattern of the last few years and will, indeed, be reversed because of the counteracting influences of planned "overspill". A figure beset by such imponderables I find impossible to assess, and although those skilled in these matters may think it right to include a figure under this head, I propose to exclude it altogether.

(iii) *Houses required for Lodgers*

8. This figure gave rise to considerable dispute and it was ultimately clear that the Table on which it was based had been inaccurately constructed. In the result, however, I accept the figure of 9,000, although it is apparent, in the accurate division of categories comprising it, that there are fewer cases in the more urgent categories than appeared to be the case from the original Table.

(iv) *Houses to replace Temporary Housing, etc.*

9. This category was not included in the Estimate made at the 1953 Inquiry. It includes 1,333 prefabricated houses affected by Section 19 of the Housing Repairs and Rents Act, 1954 and, therefore, liable to be demolished in 1965, and 990 prefabricated houses now on land needed for open spaces etc. While I accept the figure, no claim of urgency was made apart from the present statutory mandate.

10. My assessment of Manchester's housing need in accordance with the foregoing conclusions is 71,000 houses, this being the global figure for which it would seem to me to be prudent for the City to plan. In this connection it is to be noted that the Manchester Development Plan envisages not more than 22,000 slum dwellings to be replaced up to 1971, although no doubt the Corporation should, as they intend, replace as many as possible in excess of that figure within that period.

#### **D. Manchester's likely requirements for Housing Sites 1958-1971**

11. For the period 1958-1971 ("the relevant period") Manchester estimate that they will require sites for about 40,000 houses. This estimate is based on the attainment of a building programme of 2,875 houses in 1958 and thereafter of 3,000 houses a year, but this is upon the assumption that they have Lymm or its equivalent available for the start of house building by about 1962. Failing that they were unable to give any estimate of what rate could be achieved.

12. During this same period there will be available to Manchester, partly on sites in north and south Manchester and Wythenshawe, partly on redevelopment sites within the City and partly on sites in the counties of Cheshire, Lancashire and Derbyshire, land sufficient for some 26,000 houses. The result arithmetically is a deficiency of sites for some 14,000 dwellings as at July, 1971 and Manchester claim that the only sure way of meeting this deficiency is to build at Lymm. Whether or not this claim is made good is the crux of the problem.

13. The extent to which sites will be needed in excess of those which can be foreseen at present, or as Manchester put it, the "deficiency" in sites as at 1971, depends primarily and fundamentally upon the rate of house building which can reasonably be expected to be achieved, and my terms of reference require me to assume the importance of Manchester being able to maintain a steady and adequate rate. That, I take it, involves the availability of sites on which building can continue in an orderly way so that there can be produced year by year houses in numbers comparable with the dimension of the problem which makes their provision necessary.

14. The following facts have a bearing on the question of what should be regarded as a steady and adequate rate:

- (a) In the Written Analysis (1951) for the Manchester Development Plan,
  - (i) 16,400 buildings were considered to be ready for immediate clearance under the Housing Acts.
  - (ii) It was estimated that 20,050 slum dwellings would be demolished in redevelopment schemes.
  - (iii) The rate assumed for the construction of Local Authority housing in the period 1951 to 1971 was 2,000 houses per annum for 1951/1956 and 2,400 thereafter.

- (b) In the post-war years, through direct works and contractors, the figure of 2,000 houses was first topped in 1950 and thereafter the figures have been :

1951	...	...	...	...	2,447
1952	...	...	...	...	2,265
1953	...	...	...	...	2,634
1954	...	...	...	...	2,090
1955	...	...	...	...	1,962
1956	...	...	...	...	1,364
1957	...	...	...	...	1,500

During this period Manchester's housing need has always received Government recognition and their programme has not been "rationed" at any time.

- (c) In July, 1952 Manchester first estimated a rate of 3,000 houses per annum from 1961 to 1971 and that figure was put forward at the 1953 Inquiry in support of the claim to secure "a continuity of future sites which will enable Manchester's labour force to continue in full employment" at a time when that force amounted to 1,900.
- (d) If it were decided that Manchester's share of the future house building programme for the south-east Lancashire conurbation, when the emphasis is likely to be upon slum clearance, should not exceed its share during the years 1951 to 1957, when the emphasis has been upon relief of housing shortage, 2,000 houses a year would be Manchester's calculated allotment.

15. Although, generally, it would be prudent to measure future hopes by past achievement, particularly since Manchester have consistently fallen short of their programmed estimates, it seems to me possible only to take a very broad view of the Corporation's capacity in a field where so great an influence can be exercised by the Central Government and where, over a period, many factors other than the availability of forward sites could affect the rate of building.

16. It seems to me that it would be reasonable in all the circumstances to assume that Manchester could maintain an annual rate of house building of 2,500 houses over the period 1958 to 1971 and would, therefore, have the capacity during that period to build some 33,750 houses. To meet this requirement, sites for 26,000 houses are expected to be available, leaving a theoretical deficiency of 7,750 sites. A lower rate of building would cause some reduction in the number of sites available for redevelopment during the relevant period, and I, therefore, assess the likely deficiency of sites for houses for this period at a figure of 9,000.

#### **E. The fullest extent to which Manchester's Housing needs can be met within the City boundaries**

17. This part of the terms of reference involved a detailed consideration of Manchester's density proposals in those parts of the City where redevelopment will take place.

The Development Plan, which has not yet been approved, put forward a net accommodation density of 90 habitable rooms per acre, this being a figure which follows Manchester's policy decision to provide new housing in

the proportion of 60 per cent. ground floor dwellings and 40 per cent. flats. This policy is of long standing and dates from a recommendation by the Medical Officer of Health to the Health Committee in April, 1943, to the effect that flats are not suitable dwellings for families with small children or for young married people. Further, Manchester estimate that 45 per cent. of those needing re-housing are young married people with, or likely to have, young children. Manchester have been asked by two successive Ministers to consider raising their densities within the City but it is apparent that they are unwilling to make any increase beyond 90 habitable rooms per acre, and they pointed out that to increase to an average of 120 habitable rooms per acre would arithmetically exactly reverse the percentages referred to above. Such redevelopment as has taken place has been at densities not exceeding 90 habitable rooms per acre.

18. This density figure represents a social decision which Manchester believe to be in the best interests of their people and it is not to be expected that they will wish to meet any part of their urgent slum problem by increasing densities within the City.

19. From 1945 to September 1953 Manchester have built in the proportion of 77 per cent. houses and 23 per cent. flats; this compares with London 7.6 per cent. and 92.4 per cent. "in county", and 79 per cent. and 21 per cent. "out county": of Manchester's present total of 50,000 municipal dwellings, 88 per cent. are houses and 12 per cent. are flats.

20. Any substantial increase in density can be achieved only at substantially increased cost and by a reversal of the planning and social standards hitherto adopted by Manchester.

A 33½ per cent. increase in net density from 90 to 120 would not produce a proportionate increase in gross density and if it be right to adopt the redevelopment standards for non-residential purposes set out in Appendix 6 of the Manchester Development Plan, such an increase would produce in the redevelopment areas up to 1971, 1,620 further dwellings, a figure which Manchester regard as derisory having regard to the size of their problem. An increase in density to 160 habitable rooms per acre, which Manchester regard as physically impossible, would produce something over 3,000 extra dwellings, applying the same standards. Those standards were criticised as being unnecessarily extravagant and the Minister has yet to approve them. But, save for one matter involving the National Coal Board which could be decisive, I find it difficult to think that in the relevant period room could not be found by skilled designing in the redevelopment areas for an additional 2,000 dwellings if the average density were to be stepped up to 120 habitable rooms per acre.

21. If this or any increase is to be achieved it will, no doubt, involve building more flats and some tall blocks. The National Coal Board have recently notified the Corporation of their intention to undertake "horizon" mining beneath a substantial part of the redevelopment areas; this could raise serious problems on redevelopment, particularly for tall buildings, but not enough information was available for me to attempt to assess the effect upon redevelopment even at 90 habitable rooms per acre. My assessment in paragraph 20, therefore, must be subject to the physical possibility of achieving the development consistently with the requirements of the National Coal Board.

22. Finally, on this topic Mr. Dulake, on behalf of the National Farmers' Union, proposed that, as a long term measure and in substitution for its present proposals in the Development Plan, Manchester should be divided into four zones at varying densities for redevelopment. In the central zone redevelopment for residential purposes would be exclusively by flats at a density of 225 habitable rooms per acre, while the densities of the inner, outer and suburban zones would be 155, 110 and 80 respectively.

This zoning proposal follows in principle the redevelopment plan adopted for certain other Cities and would, undoubtedly, have the effect of substantially reducing the "overspill" problem if it were to be imposed on an unwilling Manchester as a matter of policy, and was found to be practicable, having regard particularly to the current notification from the National Coal Board. On any view it would be very costly.

**F. The degree to which Sites outside the City will be needed between 1958 and 1971 and the manner in which this need can most reasonably be met**

23. In considering this topic I have assumed that the density proposals referred to in paragraph 22 are considered unacceptable, since otherwise the necessity to consider sites outside the City could hardly arise.

The first part of this topic can be dealt with shortly since I have concluded that the anticipated "site deficiency" for which the Corporation should budget is 9,000 and not 14,000. Unless, therefore, any contribution towards this deficiency can be made by increasing densities in the redevelopment areas of the City the whole of it must be met on a site or sites beyond the present City boundaries.

24. A number of sites have been suggested by the County Councils of Cheshire, Lancashire and Derbyshire, which Cheshire and the National Farmers' Union claim will be more than sufficient to meet Manchester's needs. Some are long distance sites, i.e., 20 miles or more from Manchester, such as Nantwich, New Church Common and Congleton in Cheshire, and Chorley and Leyland in Lancashire; the others are dormitory sites. The broad distinction between the two categories is that any move of "overspill" population to the long distance sites would have to be linked with a simultaneous move of industry, while people moving to dormitory sites would continue to look to Manchester for employment, at least at first.

25. I have not felt it possible to come to any conclusion upon the extent to which the long distance sites can make a tangible contribution to Manchester's problem during the relevant period. So far as concerns the Cheshire County Council, four areas were proposed in November, 1955, providing sites for 14,500 houses to deal with "overspill" in replacement of the abandoned proposal for a new town at Congleton. These were Macclesfield (4,500), Crewe (3,500), Sandbach (2,500) and Congleton (4,000). On the evidence I thought it clear that it would be unrealistic to expect any contribution from Sandbach, Congleton or Macclesfield. Crewe presents a somewhat different picture.

26. Discussions have taken place during the past two or three years upon the development of a site of 420 acres at Coppenhall under the Town Development Act, 1952 for the housing of 12,500 persons from Manchester together with the necessary industry.

On September 6th, 1957, following a meeting of representatives of the Cheshire County Council, Manchester and the Crewe Borough Council, an agreed statement was issued to the Press as follows:

"The Crewe Borough Council, with the support of the Cheshire County Council, have put forward proposals for a scheme under the Town Development Act, 1952, to develop 426 acres in the Borough of Crewe in order to provide 3,000 to 3,500 houses as a contribution to the 'overspill' problem of the Manchester City Council.

"As part of the scheme, provision would be made for additional industry to be established at Crewe.

"The proposals have been considered by the General and Parliamentary Committee of the Manchester City Council, and that Committee welcomed the proposals and agreed to them in principle, and have asked that the technical officers of the two Corporations and of the County Council should work out the details of the scheme".

The proposal depends entirely upon the move to Crewe of the necessary supporting industry and this, in turn, will involve a revision of the policy which the Board of Trade has hitherto followed in relation to Crewe. A further factor on which assurances will be necessary is the question of subsidence due to brine pumping.

Manchester regard this proposal as too conjectural to be taken into account except as a possible bonus towards their ultimate problem but it seems to me that a policy decision at Government level could turn this proposal, on which there seems to be a substantial measure of agreement among the authorities concerned, into a live project in time to enable Crewe to contribute to the extent of 3,500 houses during the relevant period but a fairly early decision would be needed.

27. The only other long distance sites considered were at Chorley and Leyland in Lancashire, 21 and 25 miles from Manchester respectively. Both areas had been defined in the Lancashire Development Plan for the reception of "overspill". The development of the Chorley area for 14,500 persons would not involve the provision of major services; the site at Leyland for 23,300 persons would. In both cases it would be necessary for supporting industry to move to the areas but, subject to that, land is available at both places for the reception of "overspill" under the provisions of the Town Development Act, 1952.

28. Before passing to consider the short distance sites it seems right to draw attention to the problem which exists in parts of Lancashire, such as Nelson and Colne, which was given prominence at the Inquiry particularly by the representations of the Lancashire County Council. The position of Colne is the unhappily familiar one affecting towns which in the past have been largely dependent on the textile industry. This problem of the transfusion of new population and industry to towns in need of them is not linked in my terms of reference with the problem of "overspill" from Manchester or any other town but since it is possible that some such linkage might be achieved by policy I mention the matter, but naturally I have made no allowance from such a source in my assessment of site availability in the relevant period.

29. A number of short distance sites, all of which I visited, were either proposed or mentioned by the three County Councils as suitable for the reception of "overspill". They were (in Lancashire), Risley, Tyldesley, Little Lever, Westhoughton, Tottington and Ramsbottom; (in Cheshire), Stalybridge; and (in Derbysire), Glossop. All are within the distance considered by the City Surveyor of Manchester to be the maximum for daily travel to and from Manchester although, no doubt, additional industry in those areas near the extreme range would be beneficial in order to reduce, as much as possible, the number of daily travellers.

30. (a) *Risley*. This site of 1,200 acres has some 1,000 acres of comparatively stable land at present covered by a network of railway lines, roads, overhead steam pipelines and buildings, constructed just before the 1939-45 war for use as a shell factory and depot. It is now occupied by the Admiralty who intend to vacate it entirely by 1965 and possibly sooner. The future of the site presents an acute planning problem and I do not think it provides any solution on which Manchester could be expected to rely. The only possible significance of Risley to the problem of "overspill" seems to me to be the extent to which industrial concerns might wish to take advantage of existing substantial buildings at Risley rather than build elsewhere.

(b) *Tyldesley*. Although the two sites here, with accommodation for 15,000 persons, are fairly near to the "overspill" scheme at Worsley, they have nothing to commend them from an amenity point of view and are seriously affected by mining considerations. The larger of the two is at present being worked by the Open Cast Executive and both are subject to deep mining subsidence. I think Manchester's reluctance to accept either of these sites is entirely understandable.

(c) *Little Lever*. There are two sites here for some 5,000 people (1,400 houses) in an area unaffected by mining subsidence where drainage will become available under a regional scheme. It is 10 miles from Manchester and so no further from the City than Hattersley which is planned as dormitory development for nearly 4,000 houses. The only question on availability is whether the sites should be used for "overspill" from Farnworth or Manchester. The Lancashire County Council has an open mind and there was some indication at the Inquiry that Farnworth's interest was somewhat perfunctory. If this should be found to be so these sites would seem to be suitable and available for Manchester.

(d) *Westhoughton*. There are three areas here within daily travel distance of Manchester on the Liverpool-Manchester line. No objection can reasonably be taken to the district on amenity grounds. There is no subsidence problem and the three areas could accommodate some 25,000 persons (7,000 houses). Manchester has never had a chance of considering this area for the reason that, until very recently, it was subject to the firm proposal in the Lancashire Development Plan as an "overspill" area for Salford. It emerged as a possible site for Manchester for the first time at the Inquiry when the Lancashire County Council referred to the fact that Salford's Housing Committee had decided, subject to their Council's approval, to defer until 1960 any final decision on a major "overspill" scheme since it was considered that by increasing the density on redevelopment schemes in their area, coupled with voluntary migration, their housing difficulties

would be met until 1964. The Lancashire County Council are anxious that there should be some supporting industry for any "overspill" scheme in this area and there are indications, particularly the advent of the Metal Box Company, that it has some attractions for industry.

Whether or not it is considered right as a matter of policy to keep this area "in cold storage" for Salford until early 1960, it seems to me that even if Manchester had to wait until then to know whether the land was available for them, it would be unrealistic to exclude the possibility of this area being used by Manchester having regard to the size of the contribution which it would make to their problem within the relevant period and to the absence of any other substantial objections.

(e) (i) *Tottington*. Land is available here for 3,000 persons. It is 10 miles from Manchester; public services are available and mining subsidence presents no problem. The train service, however, is poor and I think Manchester's objection to the area on amenity grounds is quite understandable.

(ii) *Ramsbottom*. Land is available for 6,000 persons (1,700 houses); it is 11 miles from Manchester and close to Bury. The country is pleasant, there is no mining problem but there are drainage difficulties and the railway service is not good. Manchester have considered a pilot scheme here but have deferred a decision until it is clear that the main sewer outfall will be constructed. There was no indication whether or when this would be done but if this could be clarified shortly, there appeared to be no other reason why the site should not be used for Manchester "overspill" within the relevant period.

(f) *Stalybridge*. The site known as Carr Brook, 10 miles from the City, with a capacity for 850 houses, was originally accepted by Manchester and a Compulsory Purchase Order was submitted to the Minister for sufficient land on which to embark a pilot scheme for 250 houses. At a later date, however, the Medical Officer of Health recommended that the proximity of Hartshead Power Station was likely to be injurious to health, mainly, I understand, by reason of steam from the cooling towers and the compulsory purchase order was withdrawn. The Minister will, no doubt, wish to satisfy himself whether, there being no other objection, this recommendation seems to be well-founded.

(g) *Glossop*. This is 13 miles from Manchester on the Sheffield electric line with a half-hourly service for a journey of thirty minutes. The Derbyshire County Council have suggested five areas which would provide sites for 5,270 houses and supporting industry. This scheme is not proposed as dormitory development but the relatively short journey to Manchester would ease the period of transition in the same way as in the case of Lymm. Public services are not a serious problem and there is no question of subsidence. Glossop, in the foothills of the Pennines, is a town which has suffered a loss of population due to its past dependence on the textile industry. Over a period, however, some new industry has been established in the town, particularly in the former mill buildings. Manchester are prepared to embark on a pilot scheme for 350 houses but they are doubtful if industry, particularly from Manchester, would be prepared to move to Glossop and whether Mancunians who were induced to move there would remain. Clearly the future of Glossop, as contemplated by the Town Map proposals,

would gain in assurance if it could be linked with Manchester "overspill" : equally, 5,000 Manchester families, now living in the slums, could have new homes on the edge of a fine countryside with urban facilities at Glossop and Hyde and a half-hourly train journey to Manchester. Nonetheless, the Corporation, who must be assumed to know their own people, remain sceptical of such a scheme proving successful and are at present only prepared to feel their way by a pilot scheme. It seems to me that there are, at present, too many imponderables and questions of policy to enable me to bring into the assessment I must make, any contribution, apart from the pilot scheme, which Glossop might make to Manchester.

### G. Conclusion

31. It can be said, without question, that if development were to take place upon any of the long distance or short distance sites to which I have referred, there would be no damage to agricultural interests or, at least no damage comparable with that which would follow the development of Lymm.

32. I now have to consider the manner in which Manchester's need for sites outside the City can most reasonably be met having regard to all the relevant factors.

As I have indicated in paragraph 16, if Manchester are to maintain a steady rate of building 2,500 houses a year from 1958 to 1971, they will require to have available in an orderly sequence sites for some 9,000 houses in excess of what they already possess or have "accepted".

I set out below the five sources, apart from Lymm, which seem to me to constitute potential sites to meet this need.

- (a) An increase in density from 90 to 120 habitable rooms per acre would at a lower rate of building than that estimated by Manchester, produce some 1,200 dwellings; an increase to 160 habitable rooms per acre would on the same basis, produce something between 2,500 and 3,000 dwellings.
- (b) If it should be decided that Farnworth and Salford do not require "overspill" sites at Little Lever and Westhoughton respectively and the land was made available to Manchester, they could build in these two areas some 8,400 houses for a population of 30,000 (or about half the capacity of Lymm).
- (c) At Ramsbottom 1,700 houses could be built subject to solution of the drainage problem. Thus, under (b) and (c), some 10,000 sites could be made available.
- (d) A potential capacity of a further 6,000 houses exists at Glossop and Stalybridge, subject to the considerations I have set out.
- (e) Long distance sites, viz.:—Crewe, Leyland, Chorley,—14,000 houses.

It is right to say again that Manchester have had no opportunity to consider either Little Lever or Westhoughton, but I find it difficult to think that these areas would not have been acceptable to Manchester had they been offered. Accordingly, it may well be thought that as soon as possible a firm decision should be reached whether these areas can be made available to Manchester; if at the same time an early decision can be reached

on Ramsbottom drainage, the sites which could then be made available would more than meet the estimated deficiency of 9,000 houses during the relevant period.

The maintenance of density of 90 habitable rooms per acre and the rejection of Stalybridge stem from advice given by the Medical Officer of Health; a departure from that advice, the validity of which I cannot assess, to the extent indicated above, would produce sites for some 2,000 additional dwellings.

Glossop is in a category by itself, but it seems to me to deserve careful consideration before being excluded, except to the extent of the pilot scheme.

There was, therefore, shown to be a large potential to satisfy Manchester's housing needs well past 1971 but the availability of the sites for Manchester are all subject to one or more difficulties, the solution of which is beyond the Corporation's control.

33. There is no doubt that the development of Lymm would present Manchester with the easiest solution of their housing problem and possesses other advantages which the Minister has already recognised; but I have to assess whether, having regard to all relevant factors, their need can most reasonably be met on a single large site or in another way or ways. One particular factor is the need for Manchester to maintain a steady and adequate rate of house building; another is the importance of avoiding or postponing, as far as possible, the taking of good agricultural land.

34. It is common ground that Lymm is first class highly productive agricultural land. Nevertheless, through the evidence of Dr. Wibberley, Manchester propounded an argument which was canvassed for the first time in public and which sought to relate the money value of Lymm's agricultural acres in the national economy to the costs involved by increasing densities within the City. If the argument and its basis be accepted, the conclusion is reached that the conversion of Lymm's agricultural land by building on it, will be far less damaging to the country's basic resources than would be the additional cost of building at high densities. This argument will, no doubt, be considered by those qualified to assess its validity in the present context together with the opposed argument of the National Farmers' Union that it is basically fallacious. I must assume that to save or postpone the taking of good agricultural land from building is at least as important as the maintenance by Manchester of a steady and adequate rate of house building.

35. If it were clear that Manchester could be assured that they could have possession of the Little Lever and Westhoughton sites in time to start development upon them at about the same time as they contemplate for Lymm, that would seem to me to be the most reasonable way of meeting their need during the relevant period, since it would both enable Manchester to maintain their building programme at a rate of 2,500 houses a year until about 1971, and would also secure at least the postponement and at best the removal of the necessity to take good agricultural land. The advantage of this course would be reinforced if Ramsbottom were also to become available. Furthermore, before it became necessary to make provision for land for housing after 1971, it would be probable that firm decisions one way or the other would have been taken in regard, at least, to Crewe,

Leyland, Chorley and Glossop. This assessment is made upon the assumption that Westhoughton and either Little Lever or Ramsbottom can be made available to Manchester in sufficient time for them to take their place in the building programme up to 1971. I feel justified in making this assessment subject to an assumption which cannot at present be ascertained because I consider, on the evidence and in my view of the sites, that these areas are suitable and some of them may well be made available to Manchester, and until it is clear that they will either not be available or not be ready in time, it would, in my opinion, be unrealistic to ignore the contribution which they could make to Manchester's problem in the relevant period.

36. A large number of documents was presented during the course of the twelve days hearing and I attach, as an Appendix to this Report, a list of the documents together with a brief description of their contents.

37. I should like to conclude this Report by expressing my grateful appreciation of the help I have had from Mr. A. Galbraith before, during and since the Inquiry.

I have the honour to be, Sir,  
Your obedient Servant,  
J. RAMSAY WILLIS.

## DOCUMENTS

## 1. DOCUMENTS AND PLANS SUBMITTED BY MANCHESTER COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Correspondence, Memoranda of Conferences and other documents from 1945 to 1952 relating to the development of Mobberley and Lymm. (Accompanying document No. 2.)

Proof of evidence of the Town Clerk of Manchester.

Letters, Notes of Meetings etc., indicating history of the Manchester Corporation's quest for land. (P.B.D.1.)

Note of a Meeting held on 27th January, 1955, at which the Ministry of Housing and Local Government met a delegation from Manchester Corporation. (AA.)

Statement of Manchester's Housing Needs. (C.M.B.1.)

Note on Statement giving details of houses required for families living in lodgings.

Details of Manchester Corporation housing waiting list for years ending 31st December 1952-1957. (C.M.B.2.)

Details of Lodgers contained in various categories of the Manchester housing waiting list. (C.M.B.3.)

Copy of an application form for tenancy of a Manchester Corporation house, (C.M.B.4.)

Notes on the estimate of natural growth of population, together with a copy of a letter dated 19th December, 1957, to the City Surveyor of Manchester from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government. (C.M.B.5.)

Details of post-war slum clearance schemes in Manchester. (C.M.B.6.)

Photographs of various properties in areas of unfit dwelling houses.

Plan showing:—

(a) Areas of unfit dwelling houses.

(b) Dwelling houses included in represented clearance areas.

(c) Areas in course of redevelopment, and

(d) Areas of proposed mining.

Plan showing the geological features at Lymm. (W.A.D.I.)

Table illustrating relationship between net and gross densities on a neighbourhood basis. (Table 1.)

Table illustrating the relationship between net and gross densities on a district basis. (Table 2.)

Table illustrating the effect of increasing net residential densities. (Table 3.)

Table indicating the main land uses of England and Wales. (G.P.W.1.)

Table of comparison between average output of enclosed farmland and output of land zoned for urban development. (G.P.W.2.)

Table illustrating types of farming most affected by urban development. (G.P.W.3.)

Table of the value of net agricultural contribution of Lymm and Mobberley farms capitalised at various discount rates. (G.P.W.4.)

Graph showing number of houses (dangerous buildings) demolished in Manchester since 1942. (R.N.A.)

Manchester Corporation's house building programme—1955-1960. (R.N.1.)

- Schedule of existing public open spaces in Manchester. (R.N.2.)
- Appendix relating to the industrial zoning for Manchester. (R.N.3.)
- List of Overspill Sites in the Counties of Cheshire, Derbyshire and Lancashire accepted for development by Manchester Corporation. (R.N.4.)
- List of Overspill Sites rejected by the Manchester Corporation. (R.N.4A.)
- Comparison between building costs at densities of 90 and 160 habitable rooms per acre, together with a comparison of subsidy costs in central areas and overspill areas. (R.N.5.)
- Schedule showing Manchester Corporation's housing programme for 1958 to mid 1971. (R.N.7A.)
- Table of sites half an acre or over in Manchester indicating their use and potential use. (R.N.8A.)
- Schedule of municipal houses completed by Manchester Corporation prior to 1928 up to 1957. (R.N.9.)
- List of housing redevelopment schemes approved by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government since the submission of the Manchester Development Plan in February, 1952. (R.N.10.)
- Table showing the extent of unsatisfactory housing in Manchester. (R.N.11.)
- Schedule of factories constructed at Wythenshawe. (R.N.12.)
- Summary of above schedule. (R.N.12A.)
- Correspondence and plan regarding mining subsidence at Tyldesley. (R.N.13.)
- Plan of the North Cheshire Area, showing surface characteristics. (Plan No. 1.)
- Plan showing the road and rail communications serving Lymm. (Plan No. 2.)
- Plan showing the North Cheshire and South Lancashire Green Belts. (Plan No. 3.)
- Plan indicating sites accepted and rejected for housing purposes by the Manchester Corporation. (Plan No. 4.)
- Diagram showing the comparative effects of adopting various net housing densities (Plan No. 5.)
- Plan of the Ancoats District (Proposed Zoning). (Plan No. 6.)
- Graph showing housing programme based on various rates of completions per annum and house building capacity based on present availability of overspill sites. (Plan No. 7.)
- Plan of sites in Manchester of half an acre or more. (Plan No. 8.)
- Schedule of 262 sites shown on Plan No. 8. (R.N.8A(1).)
- Schedule of sites unsuitable for building, as shown on Plan No. 8. (R.N.8A(2).)
- Development Plan for the County Borough of Manchester.
- Extracts from the Cheshire Development Plan. (Accompanying Document No. 8.)
- Statement of the policy of the Manchester City Council, 4th January, 1956.
- Photographs (10) of properties in Manchester.
- Statement of policy by the Cheshire County Council in relation to Manchester overspill. (November, 1955.)
- Annual report of the City Surveyor and Engineer for year ended 31st March, 1956.

## 2. DOCUMENTS AND PLANS SUBMITTED BY CHESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

- Proof of evidence of the County Planning Officer of the Cheshire C.C.
- Table of houses completed in the South-East Lancashire Conurbation, 1951-September, 1957. (K.O.M.2.)

- Table of building progress in the South-East Lancashire Conurbation. (K.O.M.3.)
- Table of age of dwellings in the South-East Lancashire Conurbation. (K.O.M.4.)
- Comparison of net housing densities in Manchester, Salford and Rochdale. (K.O.M.5.)
- Schedule of "short distance" overspill sites in Cheshire for development by Manchester Corporation. (K.O.M.6.)
- Summary of a census of traffic taken at Crossford Bridge, Sale, 9th-11th December, 1957. (C.G.D.1.)
- City of Manchester Plan, 1945.
- County of Chester Development Plan, Part 2.
- Form of proposals by Manchester C.B.C. under Parts II and III of the Housing Repairs and Rents Act, 1954.
- Copy of correspondence between the Town Clerk, Manchester, and Messrs. Bellyse and Eric Smith—(Solicitors for N.F.U.).

### 3. DOCUMENTS AND PLANS SUBMITTED BY OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES

- Proof of evidence of the Deputy Clerk of the Lancashire County Council, together with an addendum relating to land at Risley.
- Proof of evidence of the County Planning Officer, Derbyshire.
- Table showing Glossop industrial structure, 1956. (Table 1.)
- Table showing unemployed and vacancies outstanding in the Glossop Employment Exchange area. (Table 2.)
- Table showing movements to work in Glossop area. (Table 3.)
- Table showing population trends in Glossop.
- List of factories in Glossop, January, 1958.
- Plan of Glossop. (Plan No. 3.)
- Development Plan for Derbyshire. (Town Plan for Glossop—written statement.)
- Development Plan for Derbyshire. (Town Plan for Glossop—Analysis of Survey.)
- List of new industry into Glossop since 1929.
- Plan of Glossop indicating the route and size of the additional water mains which would be required to serve the overspill population. (Plan No. 5.)
- Proof of evidence of the Town Clerk, Crewe.
- Plan of Crewe, indicating suggested overspill site at Coppenhall.
- Proof of evidence of the Clerk of the Lymm U.D.C.
- Proof of evidence of the Clerk of the Bucklow R.D.C.

### 4. DOCUMENTS AND PLANS SUBMITTED BY THE NATIONAL FARMERS' UNION

- Proof of evidence of Mr. J. A. Hinks, B.Sc. (Estate Management) London, F.R.I.C.S., F.A.I.
- Plan relating to areas of alleged unfit houses in Manchester. (J.A.H.1.)
- Itinerary of inspection of proposed redevelopment areas made on 20th November, 1953. (J.A.H.2.)
- Photographs (16) of various properties in Manchester.
- Proof of evidence of Mr. Eric Voelcker, A.R.C.S., F.R.I.C.
- Proof of evidence of Mr. Harold Woolley.
- Schedule of value of production from 42 farms at Lymm.
- Production Survey—Lymm.
- Plan relating to Production Survey.

Proof of evidence of Mr. T. S. Dulake, F.R.I.C.S.

Analysis of existing and proposed residential development at Wythenshawe as at 1949. (T.S.D.1.)

Schedule of Central Redevelopment, Manchester. (T.S.D.2.)

Planning standards for a residential neighbourhood of 10,000 persons in redevelopment areas. (T.S.D.3.)

Planning standards for a residential district of 50,000 persons in redevelopment areas. (T.S.D.4.)

Schedule showing theoretical deficiency of dwellings available to rehouse persons from the unfit houses included in the 20-year redevelopment scheme under the Manchester Development Plan. (T.S.D.5.)

Schedule relating to residential redevelopment areas, 1958-1971. (T.S.D.6.)

Schedule relating to industrial land in Manchester. (T.S.D.7.)

Schedule giving details of availability of industrial land in Manchester. (T.S.D.8.)

Schedule showing effect of increasing net densities in redevelopment areas on basis of Manchester's provisions for non-residential uses and Manchester's occupancy rate of 0.82 persons per habitable room. (T.S.D.9.)

Schedule showing effect of increasing net densities in redevelopment areas on basis of Mr. Dulake's provisions for non-residential uses and an occupancy rate of 0.89 persons per habitable room. (T.S.D.10.)

Plan relating to Mr. Dulake's proposed density zones for Manchester. (Plan T.S.D.A.)

Copy of correspondence between Town Clerk, Manchester, and Messrs. Bellyse and Eric Smith, Solicitors.

#### 5. DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED BY OTHER INTERESTED BODIES

Proof of evidence of the Chairman of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England.

Proof of evidence of the Hon. Gen. Secretary of the Cheshire County Federation of Ratepayers and Kindred Associations, together with Folio of Photographs.

#### *Note.*

Any reference given to a document during the course of the Inquiry is shown within brackets at the end of the description.

## Appearances

*for Manchester Corporation :—*

Mr. Geoffrey Lawrence, Q.C., Mr. G. D. Squibb, Q.C., and Mr. E. H. Blain, of Counsel, who called :—

Mr. P. B. Dingle, C.B.E., LL.M., Town Clerk.

Mr. R. Nicholas, C.B.E., B.Sc., M.I.C.E., M.I.Mun.E., M.T.P.I., City Surveyor.

Dr. C. M. Brown, M.D., D.P.H., Medical Officer of Health.

Dr. G. P. Wibberley, M.Sc., Head of the Department of Agricultural Economics, Wye College, London University.

Professor Deer, M.Sc., Ph.D., Director of the Geological Laboratories of Manchester University.

Dr. T. Sharp, M.A., LL.D., P.P.T.P.I., P.P.I.L.A., L.R.I.B.A., Town Planning Consultant

Mr. A. R. Bullivant, of W. J. Sims and Cox Limited, Building Contractors.

Mr. G. F. Smith, Builders Merchant.

*for the Cheshire County Council, Lymm U.D.C., and Bucklow R.D.C. :—*

Mr. G. Thesiger, Q.C., H. I. Willis, Q.C., Mr. G. G. Lind-Smith and Mr. R. H. Mais, of Counsel, who called :—

Mr. C. G. Day, M.I.C.E., M.I.Mun.E., County Surveyor.

Mr. K. O. Male, F.R.I.C.S., M.T.P.I., A.M.I.M.E., County Planning Officer.

Mr. W. C. Walker, Clerk of the Bucklow R.D.C.

(also a statement was read on behalf of Mr. Burnip, F.C.C.S., Clerk of the Lymm U.D.C.)

*for the Lancashire County Council :—*

Mr. C. P. H. McCall, M.B.E., T.D., Deputy Clerk of the Council, and Mr. Price, who called :—

Mr. U. A. Cones, B.Arch., F.R.I.B.A., M.T.P.I., County Planning Officer.

*for the Derbyshire County Council :—*

Mr. H. Crossley, Senior Assistant Solicitor, who called :—

Mr. M. J. Hellier, O.B.E., A.M.I.Mun.E., M.T.P.I., County Planning Officer.

*for Crewe Borough Council :—*

Mr. A. Brook, Town Clerk.

*for the National Farmers' Union :—*

Mr. J. Scott Henderson, Q.C., who called :—

Mr. E. Voelcker, A.R.C.S., F.R.I.C., Agricultural Chemist.

Mr. J. A. Hinks, B.Sc. (Estate Management) London, F.R.I.C.S., F.A.I., Surveyor and Valuer.

Mr. T. Dulake, F.R.I.C.S.

Mr. H. Woolley, Farmer.

*for the Council for the Preservation of Rural England :—*

Mr. C. Langley-Taylor.

*for the County Landowner's Association :—*

Mr. Emlyn Hooson, who called :—

Mr. C. L. S. Cornwall-Legh, Lord of the Manor of Legh (who also spoke in his own behalf).

*for the Cheshire County Federation of Ratepayers and Kindred Associations :—*

Mr. L. Beswick, Honorary Secretary.

Mr. A. Moores made a statement on behalf of himself and Mr. A. Stebbings, as residents of Altrincham.